

# BELMONT VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes, January 6, 2005

Accepted 1/20/05

Members present: Victoria Haase, Tim Higgins, Matthew Hausmann, Sara Oaklander, Margaret O'Brien, Jennifer Page, and Diane Stafford

Members absent: Paul Solomon, Barry Winston

Other present: Jenny Fallon

7:05 p.m. There being a quorum, Jennifer Page opened the meeting.

Administrative: Minutes from December 2 were approved 6:0.

The discussion notes from December 16 (not minutes, no quorum) were accepted as accurate. The proposed acronym "EPICPEG" for the new environmental group was not supported.

Membership: Jennifer is working to fill the positions vacated by Bill Hoffman and Joe Greene. Jennifer Fallon is considering it. Suggestions are being solicited, an individual with a business background could be helpful. There was a suggestion to eliminate the requirement that a member be from the Warrant Committee.

Martin Luther King breakfast: Jennifer Page noted that registrations for the event are slow and the planners need to have an idea of numbers. The V-21 Committee was asked to make calls to previous attendees, help in registration and clean up. All members agreed to make 10 calls. Several members will be there and may be able to help clean-up.

Environmental Initiative Wrap Up: Jenny provided some impressions and summaries of opinions from discussions she had with exhibitors and attendees and from surveys. The facility was very good. The Town was well represented. Attendees were involved and asked many questions. It was a difficult event to put on due to its size and complexity. Over 1200 people attended including children (this figure does not include volunteers or exhibitors). There were enough volunteers (about 150) and the variety and number of exhibits (80) was impressive.

"Side Shows": Longer presentations (half hour) were not as successful. Improved advertisement for them might have improved attendance, although organizers think that attendees were so engaged in the exhibits in the main hall that they were reluctant to be drawn into the smaller lecture rooms. In fact, there was some presentation space in the main hall and it was suitable; part way through the day the smaller presentations were reassigned to these spaces and were better attended than those, earlier in the day, that

were held in side rooms. For another fair, these special presentations should be included in the main exhibition room. The outdoor exhibits were not as well attended as expected, but the weather was poor. There were mixed comments on the floor layout (clusters versus conventional straight rows).

**Visibility/Signage/Information:** Larger signs and better placement are essential next time. Programs and information guides could have been distributed as participants entered the hall, rather than assuming that participants would come to the information booth to pick them up.

Financially, the event was a plus. Support came from Cambridge Savings Bank, Citizens Bank, and Grants for Peace of Belmont, plus fees charged to exhibitors.

It was thought that it would have been nice to have asked the attendees how they will act differently as a result of their being there. A lengthy and diverse discussion followed. The whale was acknowledged as being a huge “hit” but did cost money. Jennifer Page also explained the purpose of the Mass. Technology Collaborative and noted their assistance on the fair, particularly in offering ideas for unusual exhibitors.

**Next steps:** The challenge for the Vision Committee is how to keep the environmental discussion and initiative going? It seems like a large fair is too big and complex an event to do each year. Discussion ensued with the options of holding a smaller event, having environmental speakers (perhaps a conference format) or holding the event every 2-3 years being considered.

One of the goals of the fair was to create an on-going group to address environmental issues in Belmont; the Committee has assumed that it would establish a subgroup/task force of the Vision Committee. Jennifer has met with Jan Kruse, one of the organizers of the fair, to explore with her the possibility of leading such a group. Jan is considering this. The question of the goals of the new environmental committee was raised. Should it influence Town government policy or focus on citizens/individual behavior changes? There are other environmental groups currently in Town and effort should not be duplicated. Possible members and roles were discussed as well.

**Annual Report:** Jennifer is beginning to organizer a draft. It will include information on the “new comers” BEDPG, PIC and the environmental fair. Are there other issues? Tim Higgins suggested that the minutes be checked to glean important items. It was agreed to use the Vision Statement in the report. Jennifer Page will complete a draft with comments from members and will circulate it shortly.

Jennifer Page noted that there are only 5 original 11 members from the V-21 Committee. It was agreed to review the Vision Statement and survey data in one of our meetings, after the two vacancies have been filled.

The February 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting will conflict with the proposed League of Women Voters/Warrant Committee discussion of the Article for the 2/7/05 Special Town Meeting. Jennifer announced she is canceling the 2/3 meeting so that committee members can attend the Warrant Discussion.

Sarah Oaklander gave a brief update of BEDPEG's status. The final report needs to be drafted and approved by the group. They are still working on the trash pick-up issue for businesses. She is working with the Chamber of Commerce with assistance from Peter Castanino, DPW Director. Snow removal concerns were also discussed. A letter is to be sent to businesses on responsibilities. Sarah Oaklander is working with him on this and it will go out shortly.

Trapelo Road: Matthew Hausmann, Jennifer Page and others attended the presentation by the students at MIT; it was very well attended. Attendees were from all over town and included several Planning Board members and at least one Selectman. Their recommendations included a common theme of density, parking issues and neighborhood impacts. The students noted that they reviewed the Vision 21 report on Belmont as "business-friendly" agreed with its findings. The real question appears to be how the students' information and recommendations dovetail with the Town's Corridor Study effort. Jenny Fallon suggested that it is important to provide Town Meeting members with a memo explaining the larger scale implications of the individual proposals.

Discussion then turned to the implementation of those recommendations along with the Cecil Group recommendations from the Economic Development Plan. It was agreed that it is the responsibility of the Planning Board to advocate for this and to place the issue in the forefront of long term planning efforts. There was a consensus that the Planning Board could do a better job on this and needs to be more pro-active.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy D. Higgins  
Secretary Pro-Tem